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NASA Balloon Flight Terminated Early

The test flight of NASA's new Ultra-Long Duration Balloon (ULDB) was terminated 12 hours 13 minutes following launch Monday morning from Alice Springs, Australia.

The ULDB was launched at 8:38 a.m., March 17. (Alice Springs local time) (6:08 p.m. EST, March 16).

The balloon reached an altitude of approximately 110,000 feet (34,300 meters) prior to beginning a gradual descent, possibly caused by a leak.

flight and will be examining the recovered experimental balloon. A recommendation concerning possible design changes to the experimental balloon is expected during the coming weeks," said Steve Smith, Chief of the Balloon Program Office at the NASA's Wallops Flight Facility.

"We remain confident in the concept of the ULDB and in providing scientists with a new means of studying the Earth and space," he said.

The ULDB is the largest-single cell, super pressure (fully sealed) balloon ever flown. While the test flight was expected to last only about two weeks and circumnavigate the globe, the ULDB is designed to support missions for up to 100 days. Balloons provide cost-effective platforms for near-space observations.

The ULDB was carrying a 6,000 pound (2,717.4 kilogram) science experiment called NIGHTGLOW, a collaboration between NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, and the New Mexico State University Particle Astrophysics Lab in Las Cruces.

Further information on the ULDB program can be found at: <http://www.wff.nasa.gov/~uldb/index.html>



Rollout of the NIGHTGLOW payload.

Louis Barbier Photo

The balloon and its scientific payload landed 130 nautical miles (approximately 241 kilometers) west-southwest of Ayres Rock in the Australian Outback.

There were no injuries or damage to personal property. Recovery operations are underway.

"A team is reviewing data from the

Wallops Shorts.....

On the Road

Bob Reynolds and Tom Wilson, NASA Facility Management Branch; Al Beebe, Science & Engineering Services, Inc.; and Mike Cropper, NASA Co-op Student in the Carrier Systems Branch, took part in the Accomack County Career Day event held on March 13 at Arcadia High School.

NASA Selects PSL for Balloon Program Support Contract

NASA has selected the Physical Science Laboratory (PSL) at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M., for the award of a contract for the operation and maintenance of scientific balloon facilities and engineering support for the NASA Scientific Balloon Program. The contract has a potential value of \$238.7 million.

The new follow-on contract is for services currently being provided by contractor support at the National Scientific Balloon Facility, Palestine, Texas, and Fort Sumner, N.M., and the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's, Wallops Flight Facility.

The contract is for four years with two three-year options. It has a baseline value of \$39.8 million and a potential value of \$238.7 million. The contract is a cost-plus award fee, with indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity provisions.

PSL is to provide technical and operational services to meet the requirements of balloon flights in support of NASA's scientific programs and reimbursable projects. This includes operational flight support for launching, tracking and recovery of scientific balloons and their payloads.

The contractor also will operate and maintain scientific balloon launching facilities.

Additionally, PSL will provide engineering services to maintain and enhance technical and operational capability, and provide development and analysis support for advanced projects in the NASA Balloon Research and Development Program.

For more information on NASA's Balloon Program see: <http://www.wff.nasa.gov/balloons>

It's a Pleasure to Work with Wallops Employees

"I have been a PI in the NASA planetary sounding rocket program for 10 years, and I just wanted to drop you a note concerning John Brinton, who handles our grant at Wallops.

John literally saved our BDPR rocket mission (36.201), which is slated for launch next month. He rescued our FY03 funding (when we were out of time and FY02 carry-over) and pushed the paperwork through the system to my institution, SwRI.

Without this help, BDPR would not only have missed its launch date, but

would have had to wait up to a year for the right celestial circumstances to fly again.

.....People like John make it a pleasure to work with NASA in general, and Wallops Island in specific.

I hope very much that you will pass along mythanks, not just to John, but to people further up the management chain."

.....Alan Stern, Director, Department of Space Studies, Southwest Research Institute

Work is Begun on New Facility *by Janie Penn, Aircraft Office*



The Wallops Aircraft Office (Code 830) is in the process of installing state-of-the-art Airborne Science Experimenter Integration Facilities (ASEIF) for visiting scientists. When completed, the facilities on the first floor of Building D-1 will be used for visiting scientists from all parts of the globe.

The refurbished areas will provide the safe working environment needed to test and calibrate science instruments in support of Airborne Science Missions flown on NASA's P-3 Orion aircraft.

The new ASEIF will provide space for working on up to 12 experiments at a time in five separate areas.

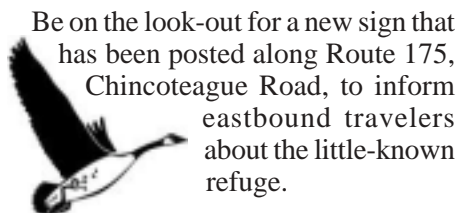
The photos are of the D-1 Manager Bay area (top left) and adjacent office space in their present condition.



Photos by Janie Penn

Blue Goose Signs

Have you seen the blue goose flying along the Chincoteague Road, headed toward Wallops Island National Wildlife Refuge?



Be on the look-out for a new sign that has been posted along Route 175, Chincoteague Road, to inform eastbound travelers about the little-known refuge.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquired Wallops Island National Wildlife Refuge in 1975 from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)," said John Schroer, Refuge Manager.

"An agreement between the two agencies also allows the Fish and Wildlife Service to help protect and manage threatened and endangered species on the 3,000 acre of the actual Wallops Island," Schroer said.

The Wallops Island National Wildlife Refuge encompasses 373 acres of land east of Wattsville.

Waterfowl, primarily black ducks, heavily use the salt marsh and woodland habitats that characterize the refuge, which is a satellite of the better known Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

Schroer explained, "The reason for erecting a sign for this refuge was to promote 2003 as the Centennial year of the National Wildlife Refuge System. As people travel to the Chincoteague Refuge, they will hopefully better understand that many refuges across this great nation make up the entire System."

CHIPSat Update

The Cosmic Hot Interstellar Plasma Spectrometer satellite (CHIPSat) has continued to perform exceptionally well since its launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base on January 12.

The CHIPS instrument has been placed fully into its operating configuration and CHIPSat has commenced the nominal science mission.

CHIPSat has collected, downloaded, processed and analyzed seven weeks worth of science data. The target duty cycle for system data collection of 92.5% has been achieved.

CHIPSat's primary mission is to examine the interstellar medium, the gas that fills the space between stars.

Former Contractor Dies

Carl Wipprecht died on Sunday, March 9, in Shore LifeCare, Parksley, Va. Wipprecht was an instrumentation engineer for Computer Sciences Corporation and worked in Building F-10.

Centennial of Flight Milestone

38 years ago in March of 1965, the Soviets conducted the first space walk.

**Resume Building Training
March 20
9:30 to 11 a.m.
Building F-3**

To register, contact Pat Dworske on x2394.

Which Way Leads to Success?

Success in your career is not automatic. What makes for career success?

Plan to attend this one-hour brown-bag seminar led by Career Development Coach, Cheryl Palmer, to learn tips on how to get more out of your career.

Date: March 25, 2003

Time: 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Place: E-2 Training Room

Learn:

Career strategies that lead to success
Career options that increase job satisfaction

Tips on staying employable

To register, call Pat Dworske on x2394.

NASA Retiree Linda Mears Dies

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Linda English Mears who died Saturday, March 8, in Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Salisbury, Md.

Mears retired from the Safety, Environmental and Security Office, NASA Wallops Flight Facility. She is survived by her husband Roy (Bill-Buck) Mears, three sons and two grandchildren.

IFMP Expo Successful

The Integrated Financial Management Program (IFMP) Expo held last week was a great success.

Almost 100 civil servants learned about IFMP and its current projects – Resume Management, Position Description Management, Travel Manager, Core Financial, and Budget Formulation.

The Expo allowed for individualized assistance from project representatives, including real-time experience with current IFM system applications and assistance in signing up for Core Financial training.

Mark Walther, IFM Projects Office Chief, and Joanne Sprunk, Core Financial Project Manager, were on hand to answer questions.

For more information on the IFMP and its Module Projects, visit: <http://ifmpinfo.gsfc.nasa.gov/>.

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Editor

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